and spent our fifth day building the new raft. We intended to make it somewhat smaller than the first—only six logs, not more than fourteen feet long. All the trees we found were half green. Our ax grew blunt and it took much effort to sharpen it. While Mikhail was hewing the logs, I used the hunting knife and a stone to fit them to one another. My hands were bleeding and I felt I was losing strength. Before dusk we tightened the ropes as firmly as we could and tested the raft by hurling it against the bank. A couple of logs loosened. The new raft was not seaworthy.

During the night a torrential rain fell. The river rose, flooding the strip of land on which our tent stood. In complete darkness we dragged our luggage uphill. We were soaked, and even if we had had strength enough to put up the tent once more it would not have helped us. So we just sat in the mud under the rain, waiting for the sunrise.

In the morning the sky was blue again, the sun bright. We checked our goods—nothing was lost. But the river had risen several feet and we could not work on the raft. Mikhail, waist deep in water, checked the raft, examined the river, and returned grim and dejected. "This raft will not hold us," he reported, "and the place is not good. Let's look around."

We climbed to the top of the hill above our camp. From this point we could see the dam and streams in the forest above and below it. The stream on which we had built our second raft disappeared half a mile from the site of our camp, under the piles of dead wood, but a quarter of a mile from it there was a strip of open water in a wide sandy bed. This was obviously the continuation of the Chelyasin. We moved the luggage to the new site, put up the tent, made a campfire, and spread out all our belongings to dry. The river, the taiga, and the sky seemed unreal to me. I was half delirious. Mikhail made me lie down beside the campfire and put a towel with cold water around my head. Later I crawled to the river and kept my head in the water. This was only a brief spell of weakness, however. By noon I had recovered enough to help Mikhail select logs for the new raft. He was some two hundred feet away from me when I heard him shouting, "The gun, Wladimir, the gun!"

I ran to the tent and brought him the rifle. He disappeared into the thicket. A shot, and he emerged from behind the trees holding a big bird over his head. His eyes were shining. He awoke me when dinner was ready—and what a dinner! A bucket of turkey stew and slices of roast turkey with toasted biscuits! Mikhail seemed completely confident, but later that night he said to me, "We are out of danger now, but wouldn't it be a good idea to write a few lines and leave the note here in a sealed can?"